

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The amendment to the claims are supported by original claim 11 and the disclosure at page 8, line 26 as well as the disclosure at page 9, line 8-20 and the disclosure of US Patent 6185323 which is incorporated into the present application by reference. Applicants submit that the amendment does not add any new matter to the disclosure.

Applicants hereby confirm the election of Group II, claims 6-32 without traverse. Claims 1-5 have been cancelled:

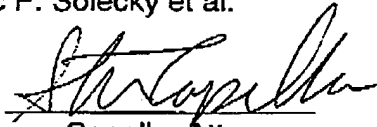
The invention centers on methods, systems, apparatus and computer programs for providing improved resolution and prediction of performance behavior and/or physical characteristic of structural features using feedback information which is provided as a function of position over respective features. The invention is especially important in the improvement and extension of resolution capability for CD-SEM measurements to dimensions below 180 nanometers. Thus, for example, the invention is useful for better determining whether a hole in a resist pattern for forming contacts is truly open thereby improving yield and process condition discrimination.

Kikuchi discloses a process for improved overlay metrology wherein the position of alignment marks are determined and weighted to account for linear and non-linear distortion between respective shots. Kikuchi does not disclose or suggest use of feedback elements from said features which vary as a function of position over such features as required by the present claims in both the calibration database and in the data provided from the target features. Kikuchi does not disclose the prediction of etchability as in present claims 11, 13, 20, 22, and 33-35. Kikuchi does not disclose or suggest the use of SEM secondary

electron emission as required by present claims 15, 24, and 30.

For the above reasons, applicants submit that the claims are patentable over the prior art of record and that the application is in condition for allowance. Such allowance is earnestly and respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted,
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